

# SPECIAL EDITION THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## New church grows, brings along giving

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

Even "babies" can see the validity in the Cooperative Program (CP) — in this case a "baby" church, a church plant, in the north Mississippi city of Hernando.

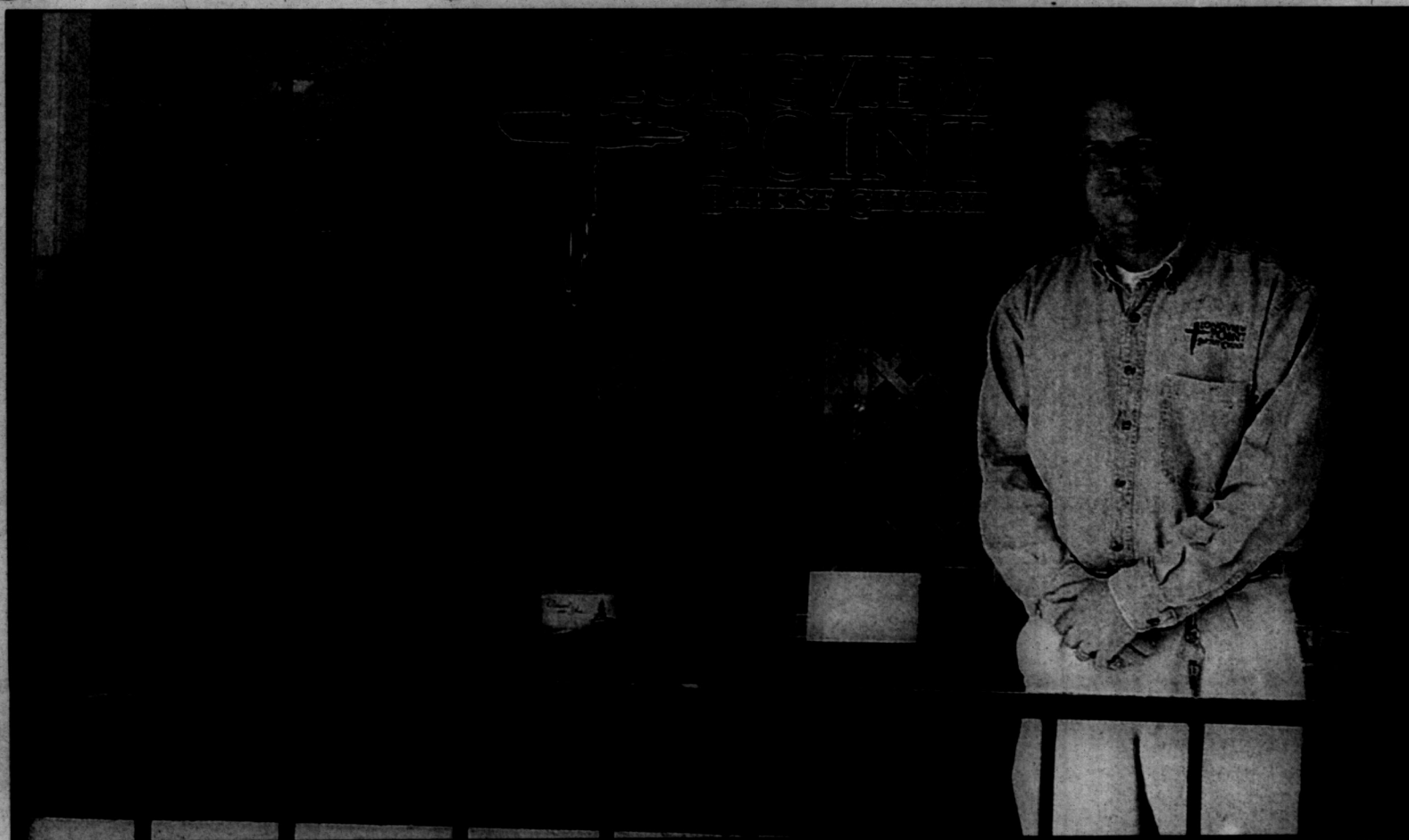
On September 8, 2002, Longview Point Church held its first public service. Now, seven months later, the fledgling church is thriving with over 100 attending Sunday School and typically 160-170 in worship. Moreover, the church is already giving eight percent of its receipts to CP — roughly the same amount it receives from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Church Planting Department.

Longview Point Church Pastor Wade Humphries was right out of Mid-America Seminary and pastoring a church in Memphis when he was contacted by Wayne Marshall, pastor of Longview Heights Church in Olive Branch which is the sponsoring church of Longview Point.

"There are plenty of Baptist churches in Hernando," said Humphries, "but there's so much growth here. DeSoto County is one of the fastest growing counties in America. Longview Heights looked at the area, and realized Hernando was about to explode just like Olive Branch did."

Longview Point occupies a storefront on the square in the DeSoto County seat of Hernando. The old Capitol Hardware store, built in the 20's, has served the new church well, with an area for worship as well as classroom space. Space is at a premium, however; the church will soon go to two worship services.

"Church planting is the fastest way to reach the world," contends Humphries. "This church plant was birthed in the hearts of the people of Longview Heights. They provided the initial people, prayer, and resources. We began with a core group of 35 or so from the church."



"This is a perfect example of Baptists working together," Humphries continued. "We get financial resources from the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Northwest Baptist Association, and Longview Heights. We're in good shape. Because of these resources, we're freed up to do ministry."

How does the church account for its growth? "Well, we haven't exactly targeted any particular group — we're not going after Unchurched Harry or Saddleback Sam," said Humphries, alluding to other church growth models currently in vogue.

"All our Sunday School classes are doing well. We've got good balance all across the board, and our youth group is exploding."

"People assume we're doing all contemporary worship," Humphries said, "but look at our order of worship from this past Sunday. We use hymnals. We sing some choruses, and I'm an expository preacher. I just take a book and go through it. God is just blessing."

As one would expect, missions and the Cooperative Program are priorities. "We've just finished our 'March into Missions' emphasis," Humphries stated. Missions

opportunities and literature are prominently displayed. "During our 'family meetings' (Longview Point avoids the term business meetings), we pass around the receipts and show how our Cooperative Program gifts are impacting the world. While we give eight percent to the Cooperative Program and two percent to local missions, my hope is that we can increase that."

"Church plants are going to reach people that established churches just can't," he said. "It's the method modeled in the New Testament. It's a simple principle — start churches that start churches."

"Our goal is not to grow big, but to start multiplying churches. As soon as we can, we plan to birth a new church ourselves. We're just trying to keep up with God."

**NEW CHURCH PLANT** — Wade Humphries stands in front of the old Capitol Hardware building on the square in Hernando, which currently serves as the home of Longview Point Church. The church, only seven months old, already gives eight percent of its receipts to the Cooperative Program. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

SPECIAL EDITION

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# CELEBRATE COOPERATIVE PRO

Church Offering Categories based on church offerings as reported by the churches.  
Cooperative Program Gifts are actual receipts posted by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

## Thurmans understand, appreciate CP

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Southern Baptist missions. CP sustains and undergirds missionaries. CP provided us with a salary, shelter, an education for our children, health care, and even paid into the Annuity Board retirement system so we would have something on which to live when we came back home.

Thomas is also quick to point out that his own education was supplemented by CP at Baptist-affiliated schools: Clarke College in Newton, Mississippi College in Clinton, and New Orleans Seminary.

The Thurmans' two sons are also beneficiaries of Baptist-supported schools and are currently serving on church staffs in Mississippi. David is youth minister at Bluff Creek Church, Clinton, while Philip is minister to young married adults at First Church, Jackson.

Gloria recalled how CP supplemented the many women's conferences and children's camp she administered in Bangladesh. "The training, the materials, and the other support provided by CP made the difference between having the meetings and not having the meetings. CP was instrumental in virtually everything we did in Bangladesh," she said.

After the Thurmans returned to the States for good, they didn't rest on their laurels. They enthusiastically accepted an invitation to minister in New York City at the Metro Association's Central Asian Fellowship. Their work there was also supported by — you guessed it — the Cooperative Program.

"CP got us off to a good start many years ago, and it's still getting missionaries off to a good start today. We're reaping a lifetime of benefits from CP. In times of crisis, there was never any doubt that the people back home were supporting us. There was never any doubt about whether the funding would be there next month.

"When you're a long way from home, that's a comforting thought," Thomas said.

Thomas and Gloria Thurman

"CP enables Southern Baptists to care for their missionaries in a first-class way. CP even sent us The Baptist Record free of charge," Thomas pointed out.

The Baptist Record is shipped free to every Southern Baptist missionary with a Mississippi connection, on any mission field where they can receive it. CP picks up the cost.

For almost half of every one of the 35 years Thomas and Gloria Thurman of Columbia spent as International Mission Board workers in Bangladesh, flood waters created an impassable barrier between the church and many of the people who wanted to attend church. They solved that problem by acquiring a large boat and an experienced captain to ferry churchgoers across the water, high and dry.

Cooperative Program (CP) dollars paid for both the boat and the captain. "We couldn't have done that without CP. How many more people were brought to the Lord because they were brought by that boat? A lot more, for sure," said Thomas.

Thanks to CP support from millions of faithful Southern Baptists, the Thurmans were able to see an entire generation of Bangladeshis grow from birth to salvation to Kingdom work while other missionaries spent a great deal of their time back in the States trying to raise enough money to return to the mission field.

"The long-term relationships we were able to build because of that, a price can't be put on the value," he said. There were about eight other Southern Baptist workers in Bangladesh, according to Thurman, and they were joined by Australian and New Zealand Baptist workers.

When funding dried up for some non-Southern Baptist workers who toiled alongside the Thurmans, they would often take the destitute workers and their families into their home until their financial situation improved or they were forced to return to the United States.

"When you talk about CP, you're talking about the lifeblood of

During the annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention last October, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Executive Director-Treasurer Jim Futral asked us to think long-range about mission support. More specifically, he challenged Mississippi Baptists to begin giving \$100 million per year through the Cooperative Program by 2020. What a vision for the new millennium! However, a vision is only as good as we allow it to be. A vision may sound lofty and warm our hearts, but if it doesn't "pick our pockets," it doesn't amount to much.

The Century Club lists churches which have translated vision into giving. They have heard the Great Commission, they have seen it put into practice through the Cooperative Program, and they have written their budgets to prioritize mission support. Almost 2000 churches across Mississippi give a portion of their offerings for the Cooperative Program, but these 100 churches have excelled according to their economic ability. We are grateful for all gifts, but these churches are worthy of our recognition and commendation, for they set an excellent example of mission vision at work through generosity.



Churches are divided into ten categories based upon the amount of their regular Sunday Offerings. Then the top ten churches in each category are listed based upon their Cooperative Program gifts. Typically churches which give the largest percentage of their offerings receive recognition as Century Club members.

In the Vision 20/20 prayer paraphrase of Acts 20:19-21, we are encouraged: "to hold back nothing..." Churches of the Century Club have taken that to heart. Perhaps we should all pray this prayer more fervently:

"Father, I pray that I will serve you with great humility, even when tested to the point of tears. Help me to hold back nothing essential for the building of your kingdom. Strengthen my faith and witness so that I may bring others to trust the Lord Jesus. Amen!"

— David A. Michel, Associate Executive Director for Missions Strategy  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$25,000 & BELOW	
CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
BERWICK/MISSISSIPPI	\$5,934.00
NEW ZION/LAKE	\$2,676.42
PROVIDENCE/ITAWAMBA	\$2,17
FBC GATTMAN/MONROE	\$1,932.18
LEARNED/METRO	\$1,903.37
MAGEE PLEASANT HILL/SIMPSON	\$1,882.67
CROSS ROADS/CHOCTAW	\$1,815.05
TINSLEY/YAZOO	\$1,783.09
SHALOM/LAWRENCE	\$1,724.16
POPLAR SPRINGS/ITAWAMBA	\$1,700.12

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$25,000 - \$39,999	
CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
CENTER RIDGE/KEMPER	\$7,500.00
EMMANUEL JACKSON	\$7,485.03
WESTSIDE/CALHOUN	\$5,347.52
HARMONY/PEARL RIVER	\$5,008.76
ROCK BRANCH/NEWTON	\$4,552.00
WAYSIDE/YALOBUSHA	\$4,172.00
FELLOWSHIP/PIKE	\$4,043.31
HAMBURG/FRANKLIN	\$4,030.52
WAKE FOREST/GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$4,014.77
EAGLE LAKE/WARRIN	\$3,979.32

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$40,000 - \$54,999	
CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FRIENDSHIP/NOTOC	\$23,877.53
ANTIOCH/GREENE	\$8,186.79
LIBERTY/LAUDERDALE	\$7,781.54
LOLLARS GROVE/WEBSTER	\$7,556.70
OLDTOWN/CALHOUN	\$7,524.16
NORTHSIDE/WARREN	\$6,635.25
HEBRON/PANOLA	\$6,121.20
CUMBERLAND/WEBSTER	\$6,006.10
McBEE/GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$5,903.83
PIAVE/GREENE	\$5,809.06

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$55,000 - \$74,999	
CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
TOXISH/NOTOC	\$23,760.87
NEW HOPE/WEBSTER	\$12,496.00
HARPERVILLE/SCOTT	\$11,639.52
SABOUGIA/CALHOUN	\$10,678.14
COLLEGE HILL HEIGHTS/LAFAYETTE	\$8,955.70
LIBERTY/WINSTON	\$8,920.03
PROVIDENCE/FRANKLIN	\$8,078.00
CROSBY/MISSISSIPPI	\$7,977.75
BETHLEHEM/YAZOO	\$7,838.06
MYRTLE/UNION CO.	\$7,494.27

CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY: \$75,000 - \$99,999	
CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
SYLVARENA/SMITH	\$25,3963.43
FBC ANGUILLA INC/SHARKEY/ISSAQ	\$19,556.58
PLAINWAY/IONIS	\$15,242.14
ROCK HILL/FANKIN	\$13,090.65
PLEASANT HILL/CALHOUN	\$12,744.89
MT. VERNON/NEWTON	\$11,788.02
NEW PROSPECT/TISHOMINGO	\$11,403.14
McCOOL/ATLANTA	\$11,025.99
NEW LIBERTY/TISHOMINGO	\$10,824.00
RIVERSIDE/WAYNE	\$10,297.04



ings as reported on the 2001 - 2002 Annual Church Profile  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board from October 2001 - September 2002.

## Antioch Church climbing to CP goal

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

When Jimmy Holcomb accepted the call six years ago to pastor Antioch Church outside Leakesville, one of his goals was to boost the church's Cooperative Program (CP) giving to 20% of the annual budget. With the help of faithful givers, he's almost there.

After increasing the CP percentage every year since Holcomb arrived, church members have pushed their giving to 19% — so tantalizingly close to their goal. "I hope we can make it to 20% next year," Holcomb said with a confident smile.

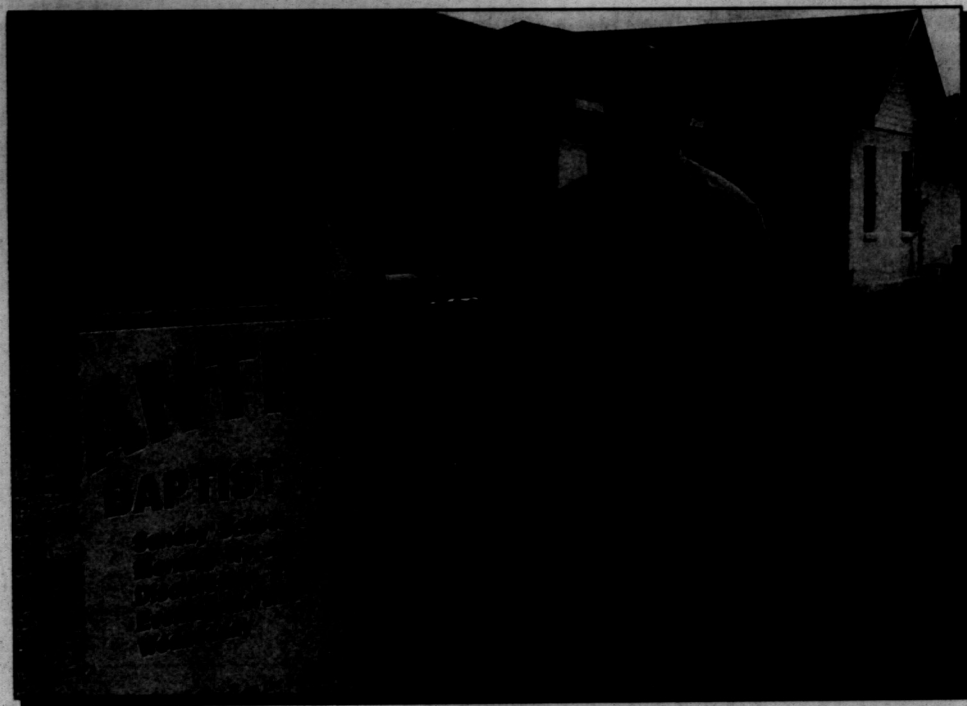
"The Cooperative Program is simply the greatest program in Kingdom work today for funding ministries," Holcomb points out. He should know; he's experienced CP at work many times in his own life.

"My undergraduate degree is from New Orleans Seminary, which is funded by CP gifts. I'm working on my master of divinity degree right now at New Orleans Seminary. If it weren't for CP funding at our six Southern Baptist seminaries, I'm sure a lot of people like me would not be able to get the quality education they need to be an effective pastor or church staff member.

"When I had the opportunity to speak at seminary chapel, I talked about the importance of supporting CP. I believe the church has to set the example for the individual when it comes to giving sacrificially, and I believe that as God blesses us, we have the responsibility to bless others. God has certainly blessed Antioch Church," he said.

According to Holcomb, the 20% goal was well-received by the congregation when they understood what CP is all about. "We invited people from the Baptist Building in Jackson to come to our church. We had missionary speakers and strong preaching on CP. We studied what the Baptist Faith and Message had to say about giving. Then there were the local ministries, like the prison ministry, where church members could actually see their CP dollars at work," he said.

Church members made the connection between the money they placed in their offering envelopes and the actual Kingdom work that was being performed with those gifts, he explained.



Holcomb

Holcomb is convinced Antioch church is growing by leaps and bounds because the congregation has been found faithful in God's eyes. When Holcomb came to the church, having 18 people in Sunday School was a banner day. Now, the small church building struggles to hold the 50 or more people who regularly attend Sunday School.

"We're in the early stages of

planning a building program, and there's already one stipulation on which everyone pretty much agrees: the church's ministries and CP support won't be cut to pay for the new building," he stressed.

As the church's giving has increased, the church's "going" has increased too. Holcomb pointed out that more church members have volunteered for mission trips as their understanding of CP has increased.

Holcomb said churches that cut CP gifts to pay for other items, as well as churches that aren't living up to their giving potential in the first place, are a great concern to him.

"Churches get into trouble when they start cutting back on CP. I don't believe the Lord is pleased with that kind of spirit. Cutting CP is like cutting your own throat. When we quit supporting missions, we quit functioning as a church. When we quit functioning as a church, we're dead. We're just another 'organization,'" he said.

"God has blessed Southern Baptists — and Mississippi Baptists, in particular — with greater resources than almost any other Christian group today. We'd better be using it right. I'm grateful for CP in my own life. It's made a big difference. Who can count how many more people there are like me?" he asked.

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM  
MISSIONS  
Making the Difference  
in Today's World

### CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:

\$700,000 - \$149,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
SKENE/MID-DELTA	\$29,868.07
BIG CREEK/CALHOUN	\$22,980.54
BETHSARAH/MONTGOMERY	\$21,437.42
CAUSEYVILLE/LAUDERDALE	\$20,816.08
HEBRON/JONES	\$19,728.82
CONCORD/YAZOO	\$19,362.80
CHERRY CREEK/PONTOTOC	\$19,261.22
CALVARY/WINSTON	\$18,737.95
CLIFF TEMPLE/ADAMS	\$18,637.69
BETHEL/VALOBUSSA	\$18,395.00

### CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:

\$150,000 - \$249,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
CARROLLTON/CARROLL	\$55,570.68
ECRU/PONTOTOC	\$37,018.67
NEW PROSPECT/LINCOLN	\$36,236.29
SPRINGFIELD/SCOTT	\$35,561.84
FBC ROLLING FORK/SHARKEY-ISSAQ	\$35,486.73
SHILOH/LAWRENCE	\$35,015.00
TERRY'S CREEK/MINE	\$32,872.71
CATO/RANKIN	\$32,555.49
HARMONTOWN/LAFAYETTE	\$31,405.56
RAWLS SPRINGS/LEBANON	\$31,165.00

### CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:

\$250,000 - \$499,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
NORTH COLUMBIA/MARION	\$73,144.66
BELDEN/LEE	\$66,638.96
FBC RICHTON/PERRY	\$64,423.00
NEW HEBRON/LAWRENCE	\$60,403.66
FBC RIDGELAND/METRO	\$60,140.69
HICKORY/NEWTON	\$57,871.08
NORTH WINONA/MONTGOMERY	\$57,666.73
FBC HOLLY SPRINGS/MARSHALL	\$55,950.00
BUNKER HILL/MARION	\$53,926.85
LIBERTY/MISSISSIPPI	\$53,453.12

### CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:

\$500,000 - \$999,999

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FBC WINONA/MONTGOMERY	\$171,308.77
FBC HOUSTON/CHICKASAW	\$126,166.38
FBC CRYSTAL SPRINGS/CORIAH	\$118,231.39
MIDWAY/LAUDERDALE	\$118,071.14
FBC AMORY/MONROE	\$112,862.25
FBC CLEVELAND/MID-DELTA	\$110,802.96
FBC NEWTON/NEWTON	\$107,181.96
FBC NEW ALBANY/UNION CO	\$103,909.88
FBC BALDWIN/LEE	\$101,276.43
FBC PONTOTOC/PONTOTOC	\$98,269.62

### CHURCH OFFERING CATEGORY:

\$1,000,000 & ABOVE

CHURCH/ASSOCIATION	CP GIFTS
FBC JACKSON/METRO	\$758,723.99
FBC BRANDON/RANKIN	\$554,597.00
CALVARY/LEE	\$352,576.64
COLONIAL HEIGHTS/METRO	\$328,505.81
HARRISBURG/LEE	\$311,283.75
MORRISON HEIGHTS/METRO	\$285,053.20
FBC CLINTON/METRO	\$273,915.58
BROADMOOR/METRO	\$246,637.13
FAIRVIEW/GOLDEN TRIANGLE	\$225,383.10
FBC MADISON/METRO	\$215,321.62



# CP more than talk at Newhebron

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

Some churches talk about missions and the Cooperative Program (CP). Others do much more than talk — and the old saying about "putting your money where your mouth is," is borne out as fact.

Such is the case with Newhebron Church in Newhebron. For many years, this church has contributed 25% of their offering receipts to the Cooperative Program.

According to Micky Little, a long-time member of Newhebron Church, 25% has been the standard for many years.

J.W.T. Siler was pastor of Newhebron from June, 1955, until July, 1969. It was during his tenure that the church began its financial commitment to the Cooperative Program.

"Apparently Brother Siler really believed in missions," said Little. "Prior to his coming, the church had given 10% to the Cooperative Program. At some point in his ministry, the finance committee and the deacons got together and decided to ask the church to give an additional one percent to the Cooperative Program."

The church voted to increase Cooperative Program giving to 11%, and from accounts the church continued to add an additional one percent each year.

"So, at some point, the giving to the Cooperative Program reached 25%," said Little. "What's amazing is that during those years, the church was also able to build a new pastorium, and a new building [housing a fellowship hall and educational space.] We moved into these debt-free, so God really blessed."

During those growing years, money was often tight, but Siler's emphasis on missions dissuaded the church from cutting back on missions giving. According to Little, there were times when church members might suggest re-evaluating the money given to the Cooperative Program, but that option was never really considered.

"At times, when there was a building program or the prospect of a big purchase like a bus, someone might suggest cutting the Cooperative Program. That never went anywhere. 'We're not going to do that,' someone would say, and that would be the end of that. Now that we're giving at that level, no one wants to touch it."

The church is also a generous contributor to the Baptist Children's Village and to the Baptist Student Union at Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Wesson.

"I think our total mission giving is close to 30%," said Little. "And that doesn't include our annual mission trips. We've taken as many as 35-40 people on these trips, and that just shows how mission-minded our church is."

## Church reaching people for Christ

LINTHICUM, Md. (BP) — "I'm a product of a Southern Baptist seminary and the Cooperative Program made it possible for me to go," said Lyn O'Berry, pastor of Linthicum (Md.) Church. "I'll always remember that."

The Cooperative Program, also known as CP Missions, is a key Southern Baptist Convention avenue for reaching people for Christ by combining the gifts from the 46,000 SBC churches across the country to support more than 10,000 missionaries and their work in North America and around the world. The Cooperative Program also provides support for the SBC's six seminaries, which train people as missionaries, pastors and other ministry leaders.

"You see why it's so important to give to the Cooperative Program? When you don't give here, you break faith with our missionaries halfway around the world," O'Berry said.

"Our people see that when they give that dollar it goes everywhere because millions of Southern Baptists also are giving."

CP roots run deep at the Baltimore-area church. The son of deacon chairman Tom Baker graduated from seminary and now is a pastor in Alabama, while member Charlie Lawson was a seminary trustee for 10 years. However, the personal ties are not what inspire the church to give 20% of its undesignated offerings to CP Missions, the pastor said.

"I've always said, as a Southern Baptist church, the underlying question is, do you break faith with the missionaries, seminaries and everything that makes us Southern Baptist? If you're a Southern Baptist, you support the work of the Southern Baptist Convention," O'Berry said. "It's as simple as that."

About 120 people worship each Sunday at Linthicum Church. Throughout the week they're involved in a wide variety of ministries that reach out to people who are homeless and in jail or prison — including mentoring those who are released. Other ministries include disaster relief, after-school children's outreach, care for those in an assisted-living center, evangelical telephone support and a food drive that at Christmas netted 556 institutional (#10) size cans of food for a local men's mission center.

That's about five cans for each person in a typical Linthicum Baptist worship service. "We're small in number but we're not a small church," O'Berry said. "We do a lot."

One of the things Linthicum Church does a lot of is prayer. Church members are a part of

Capitol Hill Prayer Partners, a nationwide group of believers who pray for members of Congress. They go in teams to each chamber solely to pray during deliberations of the houses of Congress.

"The key is that this group, working through the chaplain of the respective houses, is praying continually," O'Berry said. Linthicum Baptist, located about 40 miles from the White House, hosts Capitol Hill Prayer Partners when members gather in the Washington area.

"I appreciate this group because they do a very good job of keeping us informed of the nuances and impact of legislative initiatives and amendments which otherwise might be overlooked even by the discerning believer," said O'Berry, who receives a daily e-mail from Capitol Hill Prayer Partners. "They give us an opportunity to pray for the president and public officials, and a focus about which to pray."

For more than 20 years Linthicum Church members have participated in a quarterly telephone counseling ministry connected to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

"He started this when he was in Baltimore in 1981, and now he's in 10 cities," Lawson said. "Four times a year we volunteer to counsel people who watch a Billy Graham program on television and call the number at the bottom of the screen."

Church members volunteered six nights in December. About 25% of the callers made a profession of faith, the pastor said, while another 15% rededicated their lives to God. "The others call in for prayer," O'Berry said.

Training for new volunteers takes place the night before the programs start airing. Some Linthicum Baptist members have been involved with the ministry since its inception, like Lawson, who is a floor supervisor of the 50 or more Baltimore-area volunteers.

Church members also provide supplies for an after-school program at the Christian Children's Center in East Baltimore. Team Kid participants bring canned goods weekly for a local food bank. Members — several of whom also volunteer as counselors or in other support roles — are given baby bottles to fill with change for a crisis pregnancy center.

Members last year traveled to Prince Edward Island in Canada to help nurture a recently birthed congregation for the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists. They helped lead two backyard Bible clubs, prayerwalked, and helped with other outreach on the French-speaking side of the island.



## REVIVAL & HOMECOMING DATES

**Crowder, Crowder:** April 27; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; Truman Scarborough, speaking; lunch will follow the service.

**Crooked Creek, Silver Creek:** April 27-May 2; Don Taylor, preaching; Danny Shows, music; bring your favorite covered dish; all are invited.

**New Prospect, Oxford:** April 27; Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m.; meal at noon; Jimmy Walker, Corinth, speaker; The Canaanlanders, music; Doug Jones, pastor; for more information, call (662) 234-3650.

**Siloam, Magee:** April 13-16; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch will be served, and 6:45 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary M. Bowlin, preaching; Tommy May, pastor.

**Big Level, Wiggins:** April

27-30; Sunday, 11 a.m., dinner on grounds, and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Frank Gunn, preaching; Alan Stevens, music; David Perry, pastor.

**Parkway, Clinton:** April 13-16; Sunday-Wed., 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Landrum Leavell, preaching; Lonnie Stewart, music.

**First, Aberdeen:** April 13-16; Sunday, 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. and Tues., noon luncheon

and 7 p.m.; Wed., noon luncheon and 6:30 p.m.; Sammie Gilbreath, preaching; Bob Bailey, music; Mark Stokes, pastor.

**Robinhood, Brandon:** April 13-16; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; James Messer, evangelist; L. Graham Smith, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, music; Don Nerren, pastor.



Mississippi College (MC) Naturals

## COLLEGE NEWS

**William Carey College (WCC)** on the coast will offer new educational licensure programs beginning this summer in school counseling, school psychology and the gifted. For more information, call (228) 897-7216.

**The Clarke College Alumni Association** will hold their annual meeting on April 26 from 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. at Calvary Church, Newton, with a luncheon at noon. J. Hardee Kennedy will be the guest speaker. A special dedication, directed by Mark Yeager, is planned for the Memorial Pavilion at 1 p.m. All are invited.

**The Mississippi College (MC) Naturals** will perform *Naturally Spectacular, Let the Good Times Roll*, on April 10-12 at 7:30 p.m. in Swor Auditorium, Mississippi College. Tickets are \$10 per person and may be ordered by calling (601) 925-3856. Pictured (from left, front) Celeste Watson, Amanda Paige Whittington, Missy May, Britnye Dickerson, Lindsey Fairchild, (middle) Brandon Martin, Jordan Carmean, Jay Baggett, Justin Bennett, and (back) Drew Nixon.

## Controversial Nashville proposal defeated

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Nashville's sexual orientation anti-discrimination bill was defeated in metro council April 1, eliciting celebration from opponents but caution from those on both sides who say the issue will eventually resurface. The proposal to ban employment discrimination based on sexual orientation within the city government — thus covering all public schools — lost 19-18 in the council when Vice Mayor Howard Gentry Jr., who only votes in cases of ties, cast a "no" vote.

The dramatic ending capped 60 minutes of debate in which opponents and proponents delivered passionate yet civil arguments before a packed gallery of citizens wearing "No" buttons and "Yes" stickers. The turnout favored opponents roughly two to one.

### Building the Kingdom of God

#### Conference Teaching Will Include Topics Such As:

- The Local Church: Living the Kingdom of God  
Becoming a Global Church  
Being a Kingdom Church
- The Local Church: Advancing the Culture  
Turning the World Upside Down  
Changing the World from the Inside Out
- And Much More

Dr. Roberts will be sharing vital information regarding the challenges of moving from a "building my church" to a "Building the Kingdom" strategy.

**May 6, 2003 ♦ 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**  
**First Baptist Church ♦ Biloxi, Mississippi**

**\$15 per person, registration required before April 30, 2003.**  
**For more information, call (228) 832-4311; email [gcba@cableone.net](mailto:gcba@cableone.net); or write**  
**Gulf Coast Baptist Association • P.O. Box 2369 • Gulfport, MS 39505**

**Conference Partners: FBC Biloxi and the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**



## JUST FOR THE RECORD



James and Henderson

**Chip Henderson, Pinelake, Brandon**, recently lead a revival at Utica Church, Utica, with overflow crowds. Many decisions were made. Ben James is pastor. Pictured (from left) are James and Henderson.

**Crooked Creek, Silver Creek**, will

hold an Easter sunrise service on April 20 followed by

Sunday School at 10 a.m. and a cantata during the regular service.

**Belden Church, Belden**, held Bible Drill on March 23. Pictured are the Bible Drillers from the Youth Department (from left) Brian

Daniels, Jay Nanney, John Mark Jarrett; and the Children's Department (from left) Daniel Fairley, Lara Nanney, Hayley Asters, Cassidy Blaylock, Chelsea Fleming, and Kerry Watkins.

**Rana Burt, WOM** Coordinator for Lee County, Tupelo, spoke to the WOM at Calvary Church, Pascagoula, in March. Rana has taken mission trips to Haiti, the Ukraine, and Mexico.



Burt

Pictured are some of the attendees.

**Fernwood Church, Gulfport**, will hold Passion Week on April 13-20. Jim Kultau is pastor. For more information or service times, call (228) 896-4556 or fernwoodbc@aol.com.

The young people of **Society Hill, Oakvale**, and **Goss Church, Columbia**, recently held a Halleluja Ho Down and a puppet show.



MISSISSIPPI  
**BAPTISTS**



Belden Church Youth Bible Drill Team



Roland

**Becky Roland**, a missionary to North Africa, spoke at **Harmon Town Church, Como**, on March 30.

**Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth**, will hold an outdoor passion play April 19 and 20 at 8 p.m.

All are invited. Bring your lawn chairs.

**Calvary Church, Pascagoula**, is holding a discipleship training program entitled **Sharing Jesus Without Fear**.



Belden Church Childrens Bible Drill Team



Calvary Church, Pascagoula



Youth of Society Hill, Oakvale & Goss Church, Columbia

**ACKERMAN BAPTIST CHURCH**, Ackerman, Miss., is seeking a summer youth director. Please send resumes c/o personnel committee, Ackerman Baptist Church, P.O. Box 277, Ackerman, MS 39735.

**TRACE RIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH** accepting resumes for bi-vocational minister of music. Forward resumes to search committee, P.O. Box 2726, Ridgeland, MS 39158-2726.

**MINISTER OF RECREATION AND college:** Trinity Baptist Church of Southaven is seeking a full-time minister to lead in their sports, recreation, and college ministries. Send resume to: Dr. Jim Butler, 7200 Swinnea, Southaven, MS 38671.

**MINISTER OF HIGH SCHOOL students:** Trinity Baptist Church is seeking a full-time high school student minister. He will be responsible for the total ministry of grades 9-12. At present the attendance in this group is 100 students. Send resume to: Dr. Jim Butler, 7200 Swinnea, Southaven, MS 38671.

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH COLUMBUS**, Miss., is currently accepting resumes for the position of Interim Director of preschool and children's ministries. Please mail resumes to P.O. Box 829, Columbus, MS 39703; attn: Robyn Gaydon.

**MT PLEASANT BAPTIST CHURCH**, Lincoln Association, Bogie Chitto, Miss., is seeking a part-time music director and youth director. If interested, please send resume to Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, 3020 Mt. Pleasant Ln., SE, Bogie Chitto, MS 39629, or call (601) 734-6413.

**MONTGOMERY BAPTIST CHURCH** is currently seeking a part-time music director. Please send resumes to: music search committee, 495 Montgomery Road SW, Summit, MS 39666.

**LIBERTY HILL BAPTIST CHURCH**, Pope, Miss., is seeking a bi-vocational minister of music. Please send resume to Agnes Allen, music committee chairman, 454 Bolton Road, Pope, MS 38658.

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# Men's involvement crucial in church, family

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Did you know that if a child is the first person in a household to become a Christian, there is a 3.5% probability everyone else in the household will follow? If the mother is the first to become a Christian, there is a 17% probability everyone else in the household will follow — but if the father is first, there is a 93% probability everyone else in the household will follow.

Those statistics come from Promise Keepers at Work, a publication of Focus on the Family Publishing.

"I doubt that comes as a great surprise to most people," said Sid Woodruff, men's ministry and deacon ministry specialist in the church resources division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. "We don't have to have statistics to tell us this is true. There is something in the hardwiring of creation that naturally causes wives and children to look to husbands and fathers to lead out."

The statistics, Woodruff said, shout the importance of churches becoming more intentional in their development of ministries for men. "If you reach the men, you reach the families, but to reach the men you have to enter into their world."

Of about 94 million men in the United States, Woodruff said, 68 million don't attend any church, but 85% of those say they did grow up with some sort of church background. These men aren't necessarily opposed to going to church, Woodruff said. They just don't see churches as being "male-friendly."

"Churches by and large are doing a great job in women's ministries," Woodruff said. "In some ways, it's easier to arrange than men's ministries. Women, by nature, tend to enjoy getting together and talking to each other. Men don't necessarily think about doing that. In fact, men tend to isolate themselves. We need to find ways to get men talking to each other and forming relationships around topics and activities that interest them."

Toward that end, LifeWay has launched There Came a Man (TCAM), an emphasis named from the first four words in John 1:6 (NASB), seeking to fill a missing blank in men's ministry by equipping them to minister to each other and reach out and minister to others through short-term mission projects.

"It's no surprise that men like to do things," Woodruff said. "We like projects."

Begun last year, There Came a Man strategy will continue through 2008, with different emphases for each church year. The goals for 2002-03 are to assist pastors in identifying at least one man in each Southern Baptist church who is committed to developing a disciple-making men's ministry, provide training and resources to equip this leader and assist him in forming a core group for men's ministry.

In July the aim is to involve 1 million men in a simultaneous mission outreach effort in North America and around the world. Churches already involved in mission work can join the effort by simply

informing the North American Mission Board (NAMB) or International Mission Board (IMB) of the type of work they are doing and the number of men involved.

In 2003-04, TCAM will focus on men developing their walks with God.

In 2004-05, the plan is to assist men in developing their home, family and work relationships.

In 2005-06, the goal is to assist men in finding and developing their place of ministry.

In 2007-08, TCAM intends to assist men in impacting their workplaces, communities and world for Christ.

"There Came a Man is a vision to see men spiritually transformed and become Great Commission Christians who positively impact their families, workplaces, communities and world for Christ," Woodruff said.

It is facilitated through a partnership with LifeWay Christian Resources' church resources division and the NAMB and IMB lay mobilization units.

There Came a Man supports pastors and local churches by modeling biblical principles, honoring church practice and achieving Kingdom results: numerical growth, spiritual transformation, ministry expansion and Kingdom advance.

Getting the pastors behind a men's ministry program is crucial, Woodruff said. "Men will see it as important only if the pastor supports it."

Using his own church, First Church of Hendersonville, Tenn., as an example, Woodruff said his pastor, Glenn Weekley, took a positive step by inviting

men to participate in a weekly men's prayer group.

"What we started was a 6:30 a.m. men's prayer time every Saturday morning," Woodruff said. "There has never been a mighty move-



**MEN AT PRAYER** — The Furnace, the men's prayer group at First Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., meets recently for a time of prayer. The group has been meeting at the church at 6:30 on Saturday mornings for five years, and includes many church leaders. (BP photo)

ment of God apart from prayer," he said, noting that the prayer group has been meeting every Saturday morning for five years. The leaders of the church's men's ministries have been drawn from this group of praying men, Woodruff said.

"The pastor has been able to use this prayer group as a means of entry for men who visit the church and ask what's available for them," Woodruff said. "The pastor isn't involved in every ministry we do for men, but by being involved in this prayer group, he can bring a man to the prayer time, then introduce him to other men there who can help guys plug into a group where they will feel comfortable."

For more information, visit the There Came a Man website at [www.lifeway.com/therecameaman](http://www.lifeway.com/therecameaman). From there, links are available to LifeWay, NAMB, and IMB sites for training opportunities, resource support and mission assignments. Sid Woodruff can be reached at [sid.woodruff@lifeway.com](mailto:sid.woodruff@lifeway.com).

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## FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

### The Good Shepherd

John 10:11-16, 22-30

By Lori Clendinning

It was winter in Jerusalem during the Feast of Dedication when Jesus visited Solomon's Colonnade in the temple area. The Jewish religious leaders gathered around Him, demanding that He declare that He was the long-awaited-for Christ, the Messiah. Jesus knew the motives within their hearts. He knew they were not interested in becoming His disciples, but rather that they were hungering for a reason to declare Him a heretic or a madman.

Jesus pointed out that they were blind to His true identity, having no faith in their hearts regarding Him as Messiah. Jesus' words got right to the point: "You do not believe because you are not my sheep." (v. 26)

So much had been in front of their very eyes, yet they did not believe! Despite the first-hand

witness of Jesus' teachings, the miracles He had done, and the testimony from those whose lives He had changed, the Jewish leaders failed to grasp the truth: their Messiah was right before them. Jesus began to teach them about His relationship with the Heavenly Father and about His care for and guidance of the "sheep" who followed Him.

First, explaining the difference between a good shepherd and a hired hand, Jesus points out the dedication of the one who owns the sheep. The good shepherd will sacrifice his life for his flock by placing himself in harm's way to rescue the lost or injured sheep.

The good shepherd shows loving devotion to his flock by tending to them each and every moment. The sheep know their shepherd because of the incredible amount of time and care he



Clendinning

has put into tending to their needs.

Likewise, Jesus' willing self-sacrifice and unending care for His followers shows how much He loves us. He cares for us every moment, whether we are outside the sheep-gate or gathered safely within.

He keeps a vigilant guard against our natural enemy and watches over the paths we choose, lest we stumble and break bones.

Even still, our Good Shepherd will, like any shepherd of Jesus' day, gather the injured lamb and place it around his shoulders so that it may have time to repair while safely within the loving reach of its master. By day and through the night, the shepherd will keep the injured animal close to him. Even while tending to the rest of his flock, over coarse terrain with unknown dangers, the good shepherd goes forth carrying the wounded one until its health and bones are fully restored. This example of genuine love is evident to Jesus' followers, all of

whom have heard His voice and followed Him to safety. Believers can trust Jesus to impart great care for our security and protection. He stands as a vigilant guard against our enemy, having given His own life as payment for our foolishness in following another master.

The prevailing secular mindset knows little of genuine love and even less of willing self-sacrifice on behalf of others. Instead, self-centeredness and self-promotion guide people's thoughts, actions, and relationships. The result is that many people do not experience loving relationships nor feel any compulsion to act out of genuine love for others.

In the biblical worldview, Jesus demonstrated genuine love by giving Himself as a sacrifice for sinners and by establishing an unending, caring relationship with believers. Jesus holds all believers in His hand. Within His care we are safe, for He will never allow anyone to remove us from the security of His embrace.

Jesus told His followers in verse 30 that He and the Father

are one. Indeed, they are one in purpose, in their actions, and in their essence and nature. Whom Jesus holds, protects, and loves, so does God the Almighty. What an awesome thought this is for believers who might fear that an angry God holds them accountable for the death of His beloved Son. How comforting to realize that God treasures His flock as Jesus does and that there is no vengeful wrath awaiting Jesus' followers.

That Jesus went willingly to His death on our behalf is mind-boggling enough, but that God so loved us throughout Jesus' agonizing sacrifice for us is too much for our minds to fully comprehend. How blessed is our wonderful Father and our amazing Savior who love us so. May we, like contrary sheep, never go astray, but always be alert to our Good Shepherd's voice to do His bidding at once and may we all find ourselves safely gathered within the sheep-gate when the Day is through.

Clendinning is member of First Church, Brandon.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Guard Against Following Bad Advice

I Kings 12: 6-8, 10-11, 13-14a, 16a, 26-28

By Harold Simmons

**Introduction:** Two men received training from the same king — Solomon. One was a son the other an able man (valiant warrior or able man). Both of these men sought advice. Rehoboam looked to the older men and then to the younger men to get their angle on the situation. He chose to take the advice of the younger men, which was possibly more in line with what he thought. Jeroboam sought and received bad advice in how to consolidate his power and establish his reign. Both men made the fatal mistake of not consulting the Lord. Both men followed bad advice.

**Weigh Advice Carefully** (I Kings 12:6-8, 10-11). Solomon reigned over all of Israel for forty

years. His life came to an end and his son, Rehoboam, became the ruler. Rehoboam went to Shechem to meet with the tribes of the north for the purposes of ratifying the transfer of power and seek their loyalty. The leaders of the northern tribes told Rehoboam their grievances from which they sought relief. Rehoboam, then, sought the older men who had been in the previous administration. Notice he asked the elders "How would you advise me to answer these people?" When he talked to the elders, he spoke from a power position. (You advise me.) When he spoke with the young men, he spoke from a shared power position. (How are we going to answer these people?)

Rehoboam was a king with an



Simmons

attitude. He did not see himself as a servant of the people nor did he see himself as a servant of God. He made no effort to consult the Lord about his important decision. Pride and self-importance got in the way of Rehoboam. These factors affected his ability to weigh advice very carefully. Three thousand years later, these same factors have the same results for us and that is why we must be careful in weighing advice.

**Follow Godly Advice** (I Kings 12:13-14a). The answer to be given would be the answer devised by the younger men. The answer indicated that Rehoboam was not secure in his position as king. Many of the world's dictators use fear to keep their position. Rehoboam tried to use the same method of forced subjugation. Rehoboam felt separated from the northern tribes and that separation is signaled by his words. He called them "these people." The "harsh"

answer made it obvious that he neither loved them nor felt with them or for them. He did not care or understand the depth of their dissatisfaction. Solomon had extracted heavy taxes and forced labor from the northern tribes and he had spent little of the money or done almost no building in their area. They felt disenfranchised. They worked hard and had little or nothing to show for it in their section of the kingdom.

We are told to guard against acting or reacting to other people like this. Did not Jesus advise us: "You know the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant." (Matt. 20:25-26)

**Avoid Negative Consequences** (I Kings 12: 16a, 26-28). The harsh answer that Rehoboam gave let the people know that he did not care for them and that they would continue to be oppressed with even

greater burdens. That was enough for the northern tribes. They knew that they were not heard and the result was a revolt against Rehoboam's leadership.

However, there was an opportunist that made himself available. Jeroboam had returned from Egypt — just in case! The people selected Jeroboam as king. They had rather have a former forced labor director as king than the son of Solomon. Obviously, tribal leaders of the north did not seek the Lord's counsel in the selection. Their action combined with Jeroboam's following bad advice spelled spiritual disaster for the north.

We are not told who the Jeroboam's advisors were but we know that their advice would eventually have negative consequences. When people do not follow God the results are always predictable-disaster. Avoidance of negative consequences comes from heeding God's instruction.

Simmons is the pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, where, when details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not acceptable. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half-inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.



# Southern Baptists planning Iraq relief effort |

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist relief workers expect hunger to be one of the major needs they find in Iraq when humanitarian aid finally is able to cross the border, and churches across the United States are being challenged to help minister to that need.

Iraq's people have suffered under the regime of Saddam Hussein and 12 years of United Nations sanctions have made their lives even more difficult, says Jim Brown, director of world hunger and relief ministries for the International Mission Board (IMB).

For less than \$60, congregations can assemble a box of dry food that will feed a family of five for about a month. Brown is challenging all 42,000 Southern Baptist congregations to mobilize food relief for hungry Iraqis.

"This is a great way for Southern Baptists who can't actually go themselves to minister in a personal way to Iraqi people," Brown said. "This isn't relief that is going to be mass-distributed in a refugee camp either. It will be specifically delivered to hungry families in the towns and villages of Iraq once peace has been restored to the country."

The food aid will be delivered without regard to ethnic or religious identity, Brown said.

The boxes will contain almost 70 pounds of staple food items:

beans, lentils, rice, flour, salt, sugar, loose tea, and powdered milk. Packing instructions and a detailed list of portion sizes are listed in the accompanying information sheet.

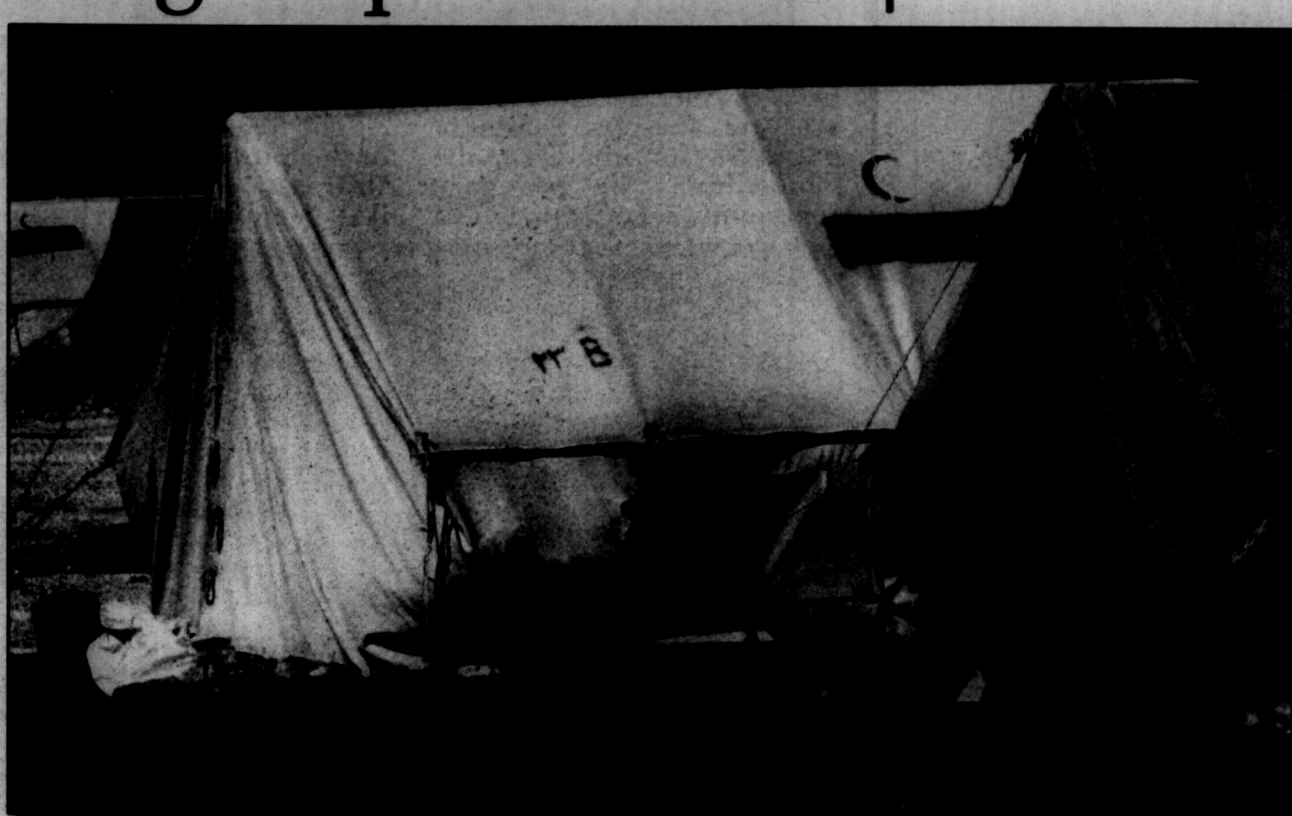
The boxes must not contain other items or literature of any sort, Brown said. Inclusion of evangelistic tracts could cause the aid shipment to be rejected by authorities.

A label on the outside of each box will quote John 1:17 in Arabic: "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." It also will identify it as "A gift with love from the Southern Baptist churches in America."

Disaster relief offices of Baptist state convention will receive boxes and, in partnership with the IMB, will coordinate delivery to the shipping point, Brown said. Specific questions about the collection process should be directed to those offices (visit [http://www.namb.net/dr/pages/state\\_phones.asp](http://www.namb.net/dr/pages/state_phones.asp) for contact information).

In Mississippi, the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board is preparing to manage the project (see article below).

People with other questions may contact the International Mission Board.



Churches or individuals who would prefer to make a donation toward the cost of the project can designate checks to "Iraq Response — General Relief" and mail to: Iraq Response, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767. Make checks payable to International Mission Board and designate "Iraq Response — General Relief."

...

Contributions may be made online at <http://resources.imb.org/index.cfm/fa/prod/ProdID/961.htm>. Every dollar given will go 100% to relief ministries.

For more information Iraq relief efforts: <http://www.imb.org/world-hunger>.

Ready to serve? More Iraq news reports: <http://www.imb.org/urgent>.

Interactive map of the Middle East: <http://www.imb.org/urgent/map.asp>.

NOWHERE TO GO — A man kills time in front of his tent, one of about 200 refugees from Iraq in a relocation camp in Jordan. Southern Baptist workers and other evangelicals are making plans to minister to the needs of these refugees, who have left their homeland with little more than the clothes they were wearing. (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

## Mississippi Baptists to help feed hungry Iraqis

RICHMOND, Va. (BP and local reports) — For less than \$60, congregations can assemble a box of dry food that will feed a family of five in Iraq for about a month, in an initiative to be launched by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB) once peace is restored in the Mideast nation.

**Directions for preparing a food box:** Use only a U-Haul "small box" product (16 3/8" x 12 5/8" x 12 5/8" = 1.5 cubic feet). Same size boxes will help facilitate both bulk packing and transportation.

Begin by lining the box with a large trashcan liner to protect the contents and

prevent spillage outside the box. Pack the items by quantity list below. Begin by layering the four bags of rice on one side of the bottom and the sugar and flour (standing) on the other sides. Next stack the bags of beans and lentils on top of the standing sugar and flour bags. Lastly place the salt, tea, and powdered milk (10 - 3.2 oz. envelopes) in the remaining air space. Tie the trashcan liner and securely tape the box (making sure the box has also been securely taped on the bottom). (Total weight will be approximately 68 pounds — box capacity is 70 pounds.) One family food box will help provide food for a family of five for approximately one month.

Do not place any additional item/literature inside the box. The International Mission Board will provide state conventions with stick-on labels to be placed on the outside of the box (John 1:17 in Arabic).

- Rice - Long Grain 4 - 5 lb. Bags. (not instant rice).
- Flour - All Purpose 3 - 5 lb. bags.
- Sugar 2 - 5 lb. bags.
- White Navy Beans 12 - 1 lb. bags.
- Lentils 4 - 1 lb. bags.
- Iodized Salt 2 - 26 oz. containers.
- Loose Tea (Lipton) 4 - 1 1/2 lb. boxes.
- Powdered Milk 10 - 3.2 oz. Envelopes.

The collection in Mississippi is being handled by the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

Mark Lott, consultant in the MBCB Men's Ministry Department, said preparations are underway to accept the food boxes from Mississippi Baptist churches and individuals for shipment to the war-torn Middle East country.

Filled boxes should be delivered to Camp Garaywa in Clinton or the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson on May 20-21.

For more information, contact Lott, at MBCB Men's Ministry Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3295 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 295. E-mail: [mlott@mbcb.org](mailto:mlott@mbcb.org).

## Security (continued from page one)

"We have at least six off-duty law enforcement officers here for church events; none of them are uniformed. Once Sunday School starts, for example, we lock all the inside doors. People can get out in case of fire, but no one can get in without being noticed," the staffer said.

Parking lots, entrance areas, and hallways are under both electronic and human surveillance, he said, and parts of the church not in use are locked down. "We're watching all the time," the staffer stressed.

Several of the church staffers surveyed pointed out the enormous legal liability of not being prepared for the threats faced by churches in modern America. "The courts have been pretty clear that an organization that knows, or should know, about security problems and fails to act in a reasonable way is going to be hit with huge judgments," said one staffer. "More important in my mind, however, is the idea that non-

Christians who want to come to our church and Christians searching for a church home should get the feeling that we care for their safety and the safety of their children at least as much as the local mall does."

Another staffer agreed and added, "Whether we want to admit it or not, we are in a holy war. Any church, or any pastor, that speaks boldly can be a target in their community no matter how large or small the church.

"To close our eyes to that fact is simply delusional, and there are ample Bible verses that describe the fate of such foolish behavior," he said.

For more information on church security, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3305 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 305. E-mail: [kmcdonnell@mbcb.org](mailto:kmcdonnell@mbcb.org).



# Seminary adopts prayer initiative for troops

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — As the war in Iraq continues, prayer is increasingly evident at New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS). Contributing to the momentum: the seminary community's participation in

and pastoral ministries at the seminary's undergraduate Leavell College.

"The president has asked for this prayer effort from the American people and it seems like a significant way to con-

nary students, staff and alumni who had been activated in recent weeks and for those, like Lee, who remain on alert for possible mobilization. Lee invited family members of military personnel to stand beside various seminary constituents who were there in uniform representing the different branches of the military.

Using prayer guidelines suggested by North American Mission Board President Robert E. Reccord, Lee led participants in prayer for the troops and their family members, for President Bush and other U.S. leaders, the enemies involved in the conflict, and for peace in Jerusalem. In addition, Lee encouraged participation in the "Adopt our Troops" prayer campaign, which seeks to mobilize the 1.5 million members of the Internet-based Presidential Prayer Team to "adopt" a military person and their family, promising to pray for them daily. Participants in the initiative also may register the names of sol-

prayerteam.org. Participants from the seminary are encouraged to bring a copy of the certificate to the seminary's campus life office to receive also a commemorative coin embossed with the words "One nation under God."

Lee explained that the use of coins comes out of a military tradition that sought to create the aspect of belonging. "[The coins] are not souvenirs; they are commitment coins, whose purpose is to serve as a consistent reminder to pray for the person and other military personnel," he said, pointing to the more than 200,000 military men or women and their families who are impacted by the war.

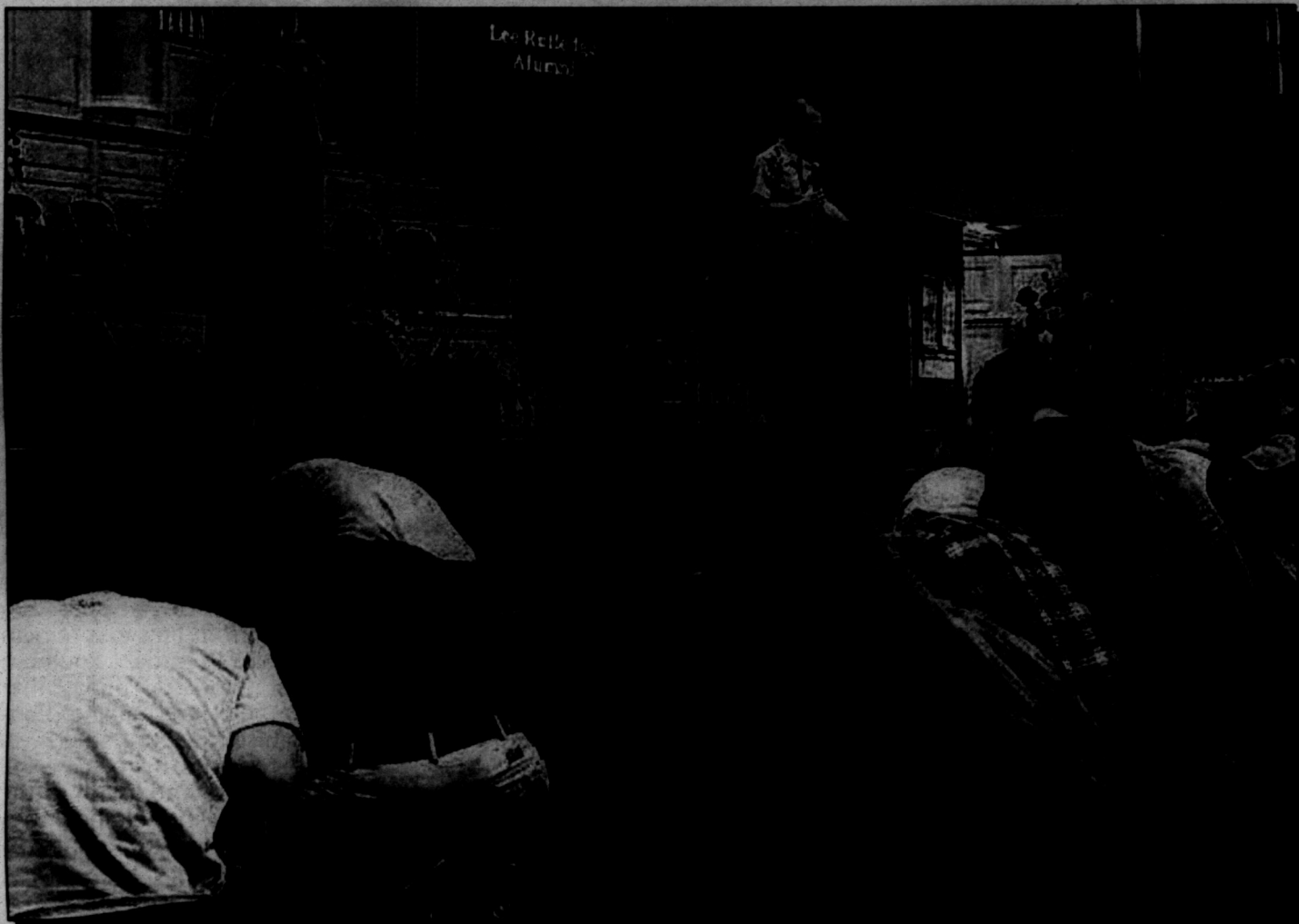
By selecting a military person to adopt, participants agree to pray daily for the individual, just as they would pray daily for the president. The military person is randomly selected for each prayer participant.

This effort is growing rapidly, and to date 500,000 people have already "adopted" or registered military friends and family for prayer.

In a closing prayer, NOBTS President Chuck Kelley acknowledged that the impact of the Iraqi conflict reaches across the world, affecting missionaries in addition to military personnel.

"We pray for the redeeming power of Jesus to so cleanse hearts and lives and so transform our world that the day will come when war will no longer be necessary and there will be peace," Kelley prayed.

For more information on the commemorative coins, contact Kerry Anthony in the seminary's campus life office at (504) 282-4455, ext. 8004.



**CALL TO PRAYER** — Endel Lee, assistant professor of preaching and pastoral ministries and a chaplain in the Navy reserves, takes time at a recent chapel service to lead students and faculty at New Orleans Seminary and Leavell College in a prayer for U.S. leaders, troops and their families and the Iraqi people. (BP photo)

the "Adopt our Troops in Prayer" initiative of the Presidential Prayer Team, an independent, nonprofit organization seeking to encourage specific nationwide prayer for the president.

"We are trying to launch an organized prayer momentum on our campus that will parallel the current threat level to our troops and their loved ones," said Endel Lee, assistant professor of preaching

tribute to the crisis no matter who you are or where you live," said Lee, who has been in the military reserves nearly 20 years, the last 10 as a Navy chaplain. "I know that I would appreciate others praying for me in this manner if I was mobilized for active service."

In the first chapel service since the beginning of the Iraqi war, Lee led a time of prayer for a number of semi-

diers and sailors they know for prayer. The overarching prayer effort is aimed to give encouragement to the troops who are placing themselves in harm's way to preserve freedom in the United States and abroad.

Those who "adopt," can print out a downloadable certificate, customized with the adoptee's name, from the Presidential Prayer Team website, [www.presidential-](http://www.presidential-prayerteam.org)

## Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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BPBYQ ASYT SL CST

OH GXYB: NB OH W

HNOBRT XVFS FNBK

FNWF GXF FNBOY

FYXHF OV NOK.

GYSBZYH

FNOYFQ: LOPB

Clue: Q = Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Acts 1:7

## POW's dramatic rescue brings joy to hometown

ELIZABETH, W.Va. (BP) — The capture and rescue of Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch has served to bring her hometown closer together and closer to God, a Southern Baptist pastor from the area says.

Lynch, whose family lives on the outskirts of Palestine, W.Va., had been listed as a prisoner of war following a firefight around Nasiriyah, Iraq, on March 23. On April 2, military forces launched a nighttime raid to rescue the 19-year-old private.

John Watkins, pastor of Southern Baptist Fellowship Church in nearby Elizabeth, said the town has come together during the crisis. Watkins led prayer vigils on the courthouse steps in Elizabeth March 25 — when she was missing in action — and again the night that she was found alive. Elizabeth is the Wirt county seat.

"The most encouragement that I have had through this was seeing that people, in times like this, knew where to turn to get help," he told Baptist Press. "They turned to the Scriptures."

The Lynch family has visited Southern

Baptist Fellowship Church, Watkins said, adding that his assistant pastor and one of his deacons are related to the family.

Jessica Lynch's rescue simply testifies to God's sovereignty, Watkins added. During the first prayer vigil — which he said was attended by 300-500 people — he read Psalm 139.

Referring to that passage, he told Baptist Press "that God is in control of all things. God knew all about it. He knew exactly where she was. He was able to take care of her. I truly believe that God has proven that Scripture true — He was in control of all things."

The town was both in a thankful and celebrative mood after Lynch's rescue, Watkins said.

"There were fire trucks running through the town blowing their sirens," he said. "Policemen were doing the same thing. People were driving around this small town blowing horns. They were just thankful."

Lynch's family is currently visiting with her at Landstuhl Medical Center at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany,



Lynch

where she is recovering from surgery to repair the worst of her injuries.